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**ARIZONA CORPORATION COMMISSION**

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September 13, 2004

Chairman Marc Spitzer  
Commissioner William Mundell  
Commissioner Mike Gleason  
Commissioner Jeff Hatch-Miller  
1200 W. Washington Ave.  
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Re: A recent incident involving the handling of telecommunications disruptions at the Yavapai Regional Medical Center and the need to prioritize critical facilities such as hospitals.

Dear Colleagues:

I write to call your attention to a recent incident involving Qwest Corporation and the Yavapai Regional Medical Center in Prescott.

In late July, YRMC personnel contacted Qwest technicians in Prescott to alert them of problems the hospital was experiencing with its phone lines. Specifically, it appears that a Qwest technician inadvertently severed one of the hospital's trunk lines, resulting in other problems for the facility's telecommunications system. The original trunk line was quickly reconnected, but residual problems remained unresolved for more than four days. Meanwhile, during this time, doctors were unable to fax out medical reports from the hospital and loved ones had difficulty being connected to patients because the hospital's switchboard would not register the phone calls. At one point, a physician was even disconnected from a call to a paramedic who was transporting a patient to the hospital.

Qwest did send technicians to the hospital but repeatedly informed hospital personnel that the problem was not Qwest's, but was rather one which could only be addressed by another of the hospital's vendors. Despite this four-day-long back and forth, Qwest's upper level management was never informed by its technicians that a regional hospital was experiencing phone outages.

While problems with telecommunications are bound to happen even at hospitals, I believe it is unacceptable for any phone provider to fail to make the resolution of those problems a priority. Individuals' lives should never be endangered because of a dispute over who is responsible for fixing a phone problem at a critical facility such as a hospital or a police station. As a result, I asked Pat Quinn to explain Qwest's actions during a recent meeting in my office. I also asked him to meet with the leadership of YRMC to resolve any outstanding issues associated with the July incident. And I asked Mr. Quinn to commit to "red flag" critical facilities in the future. Mr.

Quinn suggested that it may be unrealistic and unwieldy to expect such prioritization of all critical facilities.

Therefore, I am writing to each of the state's local exchange carriers to request information about their internal policies with regard to prioritizing critical facilities. I am also asking how they would respond to a situation such as the one that presented in Prescott in July. And I am asking whether these providers would be willing to voluntarily adopt a "red flagging" policy for all critical facilities they serve.

If these telecommunications carriers, including Qwest, are unwilling to make critical facilities a priority, I believe the next step should be to commence a rulemaking process to mandate such a policy in the interest of safeguarding the health and safety of our state's residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kris Mayes", written over a horizontal line.

Kris Mayes  
Commissioner

Cc: Brian McNeil  
Ernest Johnson